BOOKS AND THE BOOK WORLD IN TIMELY REVIEW

Overdose of Anarchy Cured "Sweet Marie"

Goldman and Berkman Didn't Ring True, and War Taught Her Love of Country

By JOHN SPARGO.

THE literature of recantation and apostasy has always excited my repugnance. While autobiography frequently attains to the very highest levels of literature, this branch sinks to its lowest depths. The "confessions" of ex-priests, reformed monks, converted Socialists, redeemed and regenerated rebels and reformers of all kinds commonly teem with malice and misrepresentation, cant and cowardice. This may be due to the corrupting influence of commercialism; certainly there seems to be no good reason why the experiences of a great intellectual or spiritual revolution, a "conversion" in the language of evangelism, should not be set forth in a manner helpful to others and in a generous spirit. A few have done this and thereby enriched literature.

If Marie Ganz, in this autobiographical fragment, which recounts her association with the anarchist propaganda, has not attained any great height, neither has she fallen to the level of so many who have gone before her—"into anarchy and out again." Her story, prepared with the assistance of a trained literary collaborator, is refreshingly free from the cant of self-righteousness on the one hand and the hypocritical pose of unbearable remorse and shame on the other. Her modesty is refreshing. She has only a very simple story to tell, but she tells it simply and never once indulges in sensational "revelations," or (what is worse) hints at dark secrets. There is no denunciation of her former comrades. She is indeed severely critical of two of them—Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman—but whether the criticism is sound or unsound it does not pass the boundaries of good taste.

Childhood in the Ghetto.

Marie Ganz is now 29 years old; so I gather from the fact that she was 5 years old when in 1896 her mother brought her to this country to join the kindly, hardworking, pathetically inefficient pushcart pedler who had been two years working to prepare a home for his little family—two tiny, dank, ill-smelling rooms in a squalid tenement in the ghetto, seeming all the more dismal against the background of golden memories of the farm in Galicia, with its clean and fragrant air and the flowers abloom and aglow in the little front garden. In this poor tenement "home" the daughter of Lazarus Ganz learned that life was a harsh and bitter struggle with poverty. She tells, with quiet simplicity, the story of her childhood. It is not at all an unusual story. Alas! there are many thousands of such histories, unrecorded save upon the tablets of memory, where pain has graven them. Its tragic commonplaceness makes the story of Marie Ganz's childhood significant.

At 23 Lazarus Ganz died. We see Marie—"strong, eight years old and looks twelve"—pitifully trying to keep up the father's pushcart business; we see her toiling in the wretched home, sewing up bottoms of skirts by hand, getting a cent and a half for each properly sewn skirt. From dark to dark the mother slaved and Marie added daily many hours of sewing to her school tasks. There were other children to be fed and clothed and rent to be paid. The fear of eviction for failure to pay "de rent" haunted the child toiler by night and by day. When little Marie heard street orators denouncing the rich she understood the bitterness of their hearts and something in her own wronged heart gave them answer.

Adolescent girlhood—poverty—hunger—fear—overwork in sweatshops: what save madness shall society expect from the association of these? Shall we wonder that this old-young Galician girl one day found herself, without premeditation, standing on the curbstone making a speech, a diatribe against the rich? That was her baptism of fire as an anarchist orator. A wave of emotionalism engulfed her reason.

There was no intellectual quality in her anarchism; no painful, labored study of the problem of individual liberty in an expanding State troubled her. She knew what hunger for bread meant: people must have bread. That was all she knew or cared. People said it was anarchism that she preached; certainly the anarchists said very much of what she herself felt and said. Therefore she must be an anarchist. It was not the teachings of Bakunin or Kropotkin or Johann Most, or even of Emma Goldman, which made her a rebel—"Red Marie" of the yellow journals—but poverty, the hunger for bread and for some scrap of beauty with the bread. (Must there not be bread and roses for all?) Though we deport fallen agitators in whole fleets there shall be no lessening of the number of Red Maries if we retain poverty in our midst.

Cried "Kill Millionaires!"

Once plunged into the maelstrom of agitation there was little rest, little time for reflection. Dominated by the one idea that society conspires against the toilers, every strike or other manifestation of unrest and discontent came as a challenge. A strike in the mines of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and the brutal suppression of it seemed to this daughter of the ghetto to call for dynamite.

"Kill a few millionaires and put the fear of God into those that are left!" cried this young woman whom our public schools had failed to Americanize. "John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is a Sunday school teacher and preaches kindness and humility, yet he is the instigator of these murders of men who have created wealth, for him!" she cried.

To these hot outpourings Arthur Caron (a fellow anarchist who was destroyed later by a bomb of his own making) replied: "Such a man should not be allowed to live. Who is ready to risk his life to see that justice is done?"

Marie brooded over the Colorado horror night and day and became a victim to a well-defined type of delusional mania. To a crowd in Franklin Square she shouted, so she tells us, "I am going to kill the guilty man and his name is John D. Rockefeller, Jr." Maddened by that insane idea, she presented herself in the office of the man she believed to be a monster and told his secretary, ". . . tell him that if he doesn't stop the killing of workers in Colorado I'll shoot him down like a dog."

That the man she thus menaced was as guiltless as herself, that he was as sincerely anxious to end poverty and injustice, her mind could not grasp. She does not apologize for this attitude. She is content to set down the fact that much brooding led her to the verge of homicide. She does, however, offer an explanation of such mental states. Speaking of Caron and his plan to resort to dynamite, she says:

"He was going out to kill, and perhaps to be killed—this homeless, penniless, hungry young man. Oh! I can see now the folly of it. I can look back upon that moment now calmly and clearly and can apply cold reason to the problems that faced us. But our minds were inflamed then by the passions arising from all that we had endured. And one does not think clearly when half-starved. Perhaps a square meal would have driven the spirit of murder out of poor Arthur Caron, and out of us all for that matter."

Saw Berkman's Insincerity.

Society did not give Marie Ganz the "square meals" she needed. Instead, it sent her to prison and further embittered her. What arrested her career as an anarchist, and started her mental cure, was the shock that came with the conviction that Berkman was insincere and a coward to boot—though she does not use these harsh words. Confident that he knew what Caron's intentions were, as she herself did, it seemed to her to be a cowardly lie for Berkman to pretend to believe that the Caron bomb had been "planted by the police."

Then came the certainty that America would enter the war. The ghetto stirred with a new ferment. Marie Ganz hated war. "What had the ghetto to do with war? Was not war made by the capitalists, who could keep us out of it or send us into it at will?

I was against war against this war and all wars, and appeals to patriotism would never change me. I was a child of the ghetto and the ghetto was against war." The ghetto was alive with fierce resentment of the thought of America entering the great fray.

Suddenly, like a thunderbolt, came the tidings of the Russian revolution and the overthrow of czarism. Now the ghetto was divided. A fierce, proud nationalism—Russian nationalism, not American—developed. The orators demanding that America remain neutral now found strong opposition in their audiences. "My opinion of war was beginning to waver," says Miss Ganz.

Proud She's an American.

From a "pal," a newspaper reporter, she caught some of the spirit that was stirring America. As his secretary she went to Washington, whither he was sent to report the declaration of war by Congress. In Washington she went through a great spiritual regeneration; emotional rather than intellectual processes once again changed the course of her life:

"And of a sudden the spirit of national pride awoke in me. The flag bore a new meaning. Oh, America, mighty and just, rallying to save the world! I was proud that I, I too, was an American. It was my flag, my cause. And I cried out to myself: 'Good-by, past! Good-by, old mates! Good-by, old doubts! Good-by, old comrades of a cause that is dead! My country is calling, and I know the road that is right!'"

She was in the gallery when President Wilson made his stirring call to arms, and she joined in the cheering. She did what war work she could under the shadow of suspicion. She even sat on the platform at a patriotic mass meeting and listened, with peaceful and friendly heart, to a speech by young Mr. Rockefeller, the man she had hated and desired to kill. She had become an American.

REBELS: INTO ANARCHY AND OUT AGAIN. By MARIE GANZ, in collaboration with NAT P. FERBER. Dodd, Mead & Co.

Marie Ganz, author of "Rebels," as she looked in her days of rebellion.

War's Effect on Randolph Bourne

When Randolph Bourne was an undergraduate he became suddenly articulate through the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly* in a brilliant defence of the younger generation. From that time on he constantly published in the so-called better magazines of the country, identifying himself with youth and helping to formulate ideas in America around which youth could centre its aspirations. He always approached his subject with enthusiasm and was keenly analytical. He had faith at that time. Then suddenly the war came and he was aghast. Neither mentally nor physically was he fitted for war. It became a constant struggle for him to orient himself. These *Untimely Papers* are an expression of the despairing amazement from which he never recovered—though happily for himself he lived to see the fighting end, dying one month after the signing of the armistice.

War forced him to cast about for an explanation of many things. The first essay, a fragment, called *Old Tyrannies*, is a rather painful discovery that over one's environment one has no control, even over its influence on the individual.

"Whether we shall act in the interests of ourselves or of society is therefore an entirely academic question. For entering as we do a society which is all prepared for us, so toughly grounded and immalleable that even if we came equipped with weapons to assail it and make good some individual preference we could not in our puny strength achieve anything against it. But we come entirely helpless."

In the next essay he berates the intellectual class for failing to erect a creative attitude toward the war. And he finds himself also in this dilemma—he must "either support what is going on, in which case you count for nothing because you are swallowed in the mass and great incalculable forces bear you on; or remain aloof, passively resistant, in which case you count for nothing because you are outside the machinery of reality." At that time he felt, as many Republicans seemingly are feeling now, that "we are a rudderless nation to be exploited as the Allies wish, politically and materially, and towed, to their aggrandisement, in any direction which they may desire." Again he asks the liberals: "If the war is too strong for you to prevent, how is it going to be weak enough for you to control and mould to your liberal purposes?"

The last essay in the book is a fragment on the State—a mystical idea. Bourne defines it, behind Government and Administration, whose health is war.

We cannot but feel that one of the serious disasters which the war entailed was this obsession it obtained over the mind of Randolph Bourne. His bravery is, of course, unquestioned and his thinking clear, but how futile it seems on the inevitable tide of events, and how much more might he have contributed in other essays, character studies, novels, had the same mind been by circumstance left free of thinking on war! Certainly his writing would then have been rid of a too intense animus. But this is a futile complaint, and these essays present a point of view to which more and more people are awaking every day. In spite of Mr. Bourne's deep pessimism, it is evident that American literature will suffer for his early death.

The preface, written by James Oppenheim, who edited this book, promises more of Mr. Bourne's work, previously published and unpublished, and a Life and Letters, and we are promised also, that when the complete picture emerges Randolph Bourne will be seen "as the pioneer spirit of his age, a symbol of our future."

UNTIMELY PAPERS. By RANDOLPH BOURNE. B. W. Huebsch.

The Romantic Career Of Secretary Wilson

Although both are in the title of his book, Mr. Babson is right in placing W. B. Wilson first and the Department of Labor second. For the interesting thing about the Department of Labor under its first secretary, is the kind of a man this first Secretary of Labor in the United States is. All his life he has been a worker.

It is the kind of a story that could happen nowhere else but in this country; the kind of a story that Mary Antin used to tell of her fruit man, who one day proudly displayed his own wagon, with his name on it, and the miraculous addition, "Prop." It is the kind of a story also that is too often forgotten in these days of general clamor and censure. A favorite dictum of Secretary Wilson is that the world does not owe every man a living, but it owes every man the opportunity to make a living.

Fifty years, almost to a day, from the time when a small boy stood with his mother in front of a two room cottage in Scotland from which they had been evicted, the boy became the first Secretary of Labor for the United States. This is Secretary Wilson's story. His father was a man without education, having become a "little Caliban of the mines" when he was 7. W. B. Wilson, the son, had reached the mature age of 9 before he became a miner. He was a miner twenty-seven years. Like his father, he never had time for much education, probably a year's schooling at the most. At 11 he was a half member of the Mine Workers' Union. At 13 he was a full fledged miner. At 14 he was secretary of the local union. He remembers his first strike, when the foreman, having listened to his complaint, took the future international secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers and the future Secretary of Labor of the United States across his knees and spanked him.

Because of his work in unionizing the miners, Mr. Wilson was 36 years old before he was able to secure any regular employment, or earn more than $40 a month. And he was married and had a family and a home with the usual mortgage.

So it will be seen Mr. Wilson ought to know something about labor. He does, and when he took office in a newly created bureau, at a most critical time of the country's history, he had use for all he knew.

Since any organization or department naturally gets its future direction at its start, Mr. Babson's analysis of the views of the first Secretary of Labor in regard to collective bargaining, a wage mission, &c., is important and interesting. His book, in fact, may be regarded as a bulwark against Bolshevism in this country, because of its romantic story of the country's opportunities as illustrated in Mr. Wilson's life, and its history of a department the function of which is to improve the condition of the workers to the end of better relations between capital and labor and finally industrial peace.

W. B. WILSON, FIRST SECRETARY OF LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR. By ROGER BABSON. Brentano's

'Legend' of Genius Created by Gossip

IN her first novel, *Regiment of Women*, Clemence Dane, an English author, revealed a striking and original talent. Almost the entire action of the story took place in the gynocratic society of a girl's school. The idea was that women by the "regiment" are a little horrible, or, in John Knox's phrase, monstrous. The author revealed an uncanny gift for catching and pinning and cruelly dissecting the female of the species. It was a woman's novel, in which the masculine element was almost entirely lacking. It was unforgettable.

Although the method of her new novel *Legend* is wholly different its kinship with the earlier story is easily recognizable. This time it is a literary group, which seems to be composed chiefly of women, that is lightly satirized. The action takes place in one night and in one room. The whole story is unfolded in the talk of the people in this room. It is indirect action applied to story telling. Is it as effective as direct action? Perhaps. Only after the swift and vivid narrative is concluded does the reader realize how much he knows of the lives and personalities of these people.

The heroine does not appear, unless you believe in ghosts. Yet you feel that you know her, and, oddly enough, that you probably know her better than her friends ever knew her. Her life is built up, step by step, in the chatter of this literary circle. *Legend*, when you stop to think of it, is a high grade mystery story, with the murder, or the death, in the first chapter and the rest of the book devoted to clues and unraveling.

As *Regiment of Women* suggested *Villette*, perhaps readers will think of Charlotte Bronte's abortive romance in Brussels, and her prosaic marriage to the curate, when pondering the mystery of Madala Grey. Marriage and "all that it implies" in the case of genius a apostasy, as some one says, adding that she stands for Literature with a large L. Marriage and all that it implies for Madala Grey is told in the telegram announcing the birth of a son and her own death.

But if Madala Grey had been apostate to literature, not so her friends, particularly the one friend who is to be her biographer. The telegram is no sooner brought than the ghouls get busy. An appropriate setting for their work is provided by the fog outside and the drafty passage and the slamming door and the querulous interruptions of an old greataunt knitting in her hooded chair. It is a horrid exhibition, but Literature must be served, and the curiosity of the public regarding a successful writer must be gratified.

The significance of the title is obvious. The biography will be "Legend." The story begins: "Messrs. Mitchell & Brent will shortly issue *The Life of Madala Grey*, by Anita Serle, a critical biography based largely on private correspondence and intimate personal knowledge." The reviews when they appear declare, "delicately, unerringly Miss Serle traces to its source the inspiration of that remarkable writer."

It takes a little time for the full irony of the title to sink in. The only American who might have written it would have been Edith Wharton in her more acid days. The staccato style used by May Sinclair in *Mary Olivier* is particularly well adapted to the concentrated interest of *Legend*.

LEGEND. By CLEMENCE DANE. The Macmillan Company.